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UNCLAS ANKARA 000979

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR DS, EB/TRA AND EUR/SE
ROME FOR FAA
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DHS FOR TSA

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [FAIR PTER TU](#)
SUBJECT: THE GOT TAKES STEPS TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING
CIVIL AVIATION SECURITY ISSUES

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED. PLEASE HANDLE
ACCORDINGLY.

REF: ANKARA 262

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: THE TURKISH NATIONAL POLICE' (TNP'S) AIRPORT SECURITY DIRECTOR TOLD US THE NATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION SECURITY COUNCIL RECENTLY DISCUSSED THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY'S (DHS') AMENDMENTS ON POSTING ARMED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ON PLANES AND A GAP IN IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS CONTROLS FOR INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS ARRIVING AT TURKISH AIRPORTS. THE COUNCIL DIRECTED GOT AGENCIES AND THE AIRLINES TO COMMENCE STUDIES AND MAKE OTHER PREPARATIONS FOR POSTING LEOS ON PLANES IF NECESSARY. THE COUNCIL ALSO DECIDED TO RETURN TO A SYSTEM OF REQUIRING INTERNATIONAL PASSENGERS TO CLEAR CUSTOMS AND BORDER CONTROLS AT THE FIRST PORT OF ENTRY, BUT WITH A FOUR TO FIVE-MONTH TRANSITION PERIOD. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) ECONOMIC SPECIALIST CONTACTED TNP AIRPORT SECURITY DIRECTOR TURGAY SAHAN ON FEBRUARY 13 FOR AN UPDATE ON THE GOT'S PLANS TO COMPLY WITH DHS' RECENT AVIATION AMENDMENTS WHICH COULD REQUIRE POSTING ARMED LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS (LEOS) ON FLIGHTS TO AND OVER THE UNITED STATES, AND CONCERNING A LOOPHOLE IN IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS CONTROLS FOR INTERNATIONAL PASSENGERS ARRIVING AT TURKISH AIRPORTS (REFTEL). SAHAN TOLD ECON SPECIALIST THAT THESE WERE THE MAIN AGENDA ITEMS AT TURKEY'S NATIONAL AVIATION SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING ON FEBRUARY 10.

3. (SBU) LEOS: SAHAN SAID THE COUNCIL WAS HESITANT ON THIS ISSUE, DUE MAINLY TO A LACK OF GUIDANCE FROM ICAO AND TO INFRASTRUCTURE DEFICIENCIES AT TURKISH AIRPORTS. SAHAN NOTED THAT ANOTHER MAJOR CHALLENGE THE GOT FACED IN IMPLEMENTATION WAS THE FINANCING OF TRAVEL, LODGING AND INSURANCE EXPENSES OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ON THE PLANES. THE COUNCIL DECIDED TO MOVE AHEAD WITH THE PREPARATIONS DESPITE THESE PROBLEMS. THE COUNCIL DIRECTED THE AIRLINE COMPANIES TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE COST OF TRANSPORTING THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS, THE TRANSPORT MINISTRY TO PREPARE THE REGULATORY BASIS FOR POSTING THESE OFFICERS ON FLIGHTS AND THE INTERIOR MINISTRY TO PREPARE A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR THE LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS. SAHAN UNOFFICIALLY COMMENTED THAT THE GOT WAS NOT PLANNING TO PUBLICLY ANNOUNCE ITS STANCE REGARDING THIS ISSUE, DUE TO POSSIBLE NEGATIVE REACTION FROM OTHER ICAO COUNTRIES.

4. (SBU) GAP IN BORDER CONTROLS: THE COUNCIL ALSO DISCUSSED CLOSING A LOOPHOLE WHICH COULD ALLOW INTERNATIONAL PASSENGERS TO AVOID PASSING THROUGH IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS CONTROLS IN SOME AIRPORTS (REFTEL), AND DECIDED TO GO BACK TO THE PREVIOUS SYSTEM IN WHICH INTERNATIONAL PASSENGERS WERE REQUIRED TO CLEAR THESE CONTROLS AT THE FIRST PORT OF ENTRY. SAHAN NOTED THAT THE GOT FACED SEVERAL DIFFICULTIES WHEN THIS SYSTEM WAS FIRST IMPLEMENTED, DUE TO INSUFFICIENT PREPARATIONS AT THE AIRPORTS. SAHAN SAID THAT, TO AVOID THIS PROBLEM, THE COUNCIL GRANTED A TRANSITION PERIOD OF FOUR TO FIVE MONTHS FOR GOT AGENCIES TO COMPLETE PREPARATIONS. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS TO ENSURE THE TRANSITION IS DONE IN THE SHORTEST

POSSIBLE PERIOD.
EDELMAN